

Top Tips for Success with Applications

Make sure your application matches the job criteria. Many job vacancies include a *person specification* as well as a job description. This contains a list of the criteria (skills, qualities, qualifications and experience) needed to do the job and is used in the shortlisting process to assess the suitability of each applicant. Address each of the criteria, making it clear to the reader which one you are referring to. Use headings if you wish and put your points in the same order as they appear in the person specification. If there is no person specification analyse the vacancy information to work out what the employer is looking for.

Provide evidence of your suitability. Describe *how* and *where* you developed the skills and qualities listed in the criteria, e.g. through your course, part time job, voluntary work, hobbies. The ideal place to do this is in the personal statement section of the form. Numbers and outcomes such as how many people you supervised or the amount of money you raised help create a positive impression.

Think about what makes you different from everyone else. Jot down a list of things that will impress an employer (for example, your promotion at work, your role as programme rep or treasurer of the chess club, the dissertation topic you chose or your voluntary work with homeless people). Mention as many as possible on the application form but you need to use them as *evidence* that you have the skills and qualities required for the job.

Your part time jobs ARE relevant. Think of the graduate skills you have developed (working under pressure, resolving customers' problems, supervising and training other members of staff, teamwork, meeting targets) and describe them in a positive way.

Convince the employer you really want the job. If you are asked to explain why you are applying, show that you are enthusiastic and knowledgeable about the role and the organisation. Research the organisation as thoroughly as you can and offer evidence that you have something to offer.

Don't type or write your application in block capitals unless you are told to. It makes your form difficult to read and annoys employers.

Correct spelling and grammar are very important. Not only does a sloppily presented form suggest you can't spell and have poor attention to detail; it also implies you aren't really bothered whether or not you get the job!

Read the instructions carefully. Not doing so may mean your form is immediately rejected. Keep within any word limits and list your qualifications and employment in the right order. Don't include a CV if you are specifically told not to. Most application forms are accompanied by guidance notes, which should answer most of your questions.

Give yourself plenty of time. A good application may take several days to complete. Include enough time to check it carefully or ask someone else to check it for you. Don't leave sections blank because you don't have time or can't think what to say. Twenty really good applications will get you further than a hundred hastily completed ones

Seek advice. You remain a core client of the Careers Service for two years after you leave the University. Staff in the Careers Service can give you feedback on applications (but we cannot check your spelling and grammar). See our website www.tees.ac.uk/careers for information about eligibility, how to get advice and our full range of services.

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